



HFCC - International Broadcasting Delivery

CDAC Network Membership

The HFCC¹ is active in a specialised field of global media distribution. It fully supports ideas of the world's largest humanitarian organisation - the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies that has underlined the life-saving role of information already in two of its annual World Disaster Reports: "People need information as much as water, food, medicine or shelter," the 2005 Report has pointed out: "Information can save lives, livelihoods and resources. It may be the only form of disaster preparedness that the most vulnerable can afford."

The 2013 Disaster Report issued in October went further and warned that marginalised groups may not have the money or the knowledge to take advantage of the digital revolution. It has noted that with only 6 percent of people in low-income countries using the internet in 2011 the digital divide is still stark, and access to low cost media technology is really the key:

Joelle Tanguy, the IFRC's under secretary general for humanitarian values and diplomacy, told Thomson Reuters Foundation in October that the aid community is still only beginning to deploy technology effectively. "Our message is to take it on with a principled humanitarian view - understand its limitations, and make sure you are not forgetting the most vulnerable," she said.

The HFCC is aware of the new and smart communication possibilities provided by the changing media climate and its constantly increasing number of delivery channels that might be even confusing both for the disaster stricken communities as well as for the information providers. There is no silver bullet that can fix everything and the HFCC maintains that there are some well known technological opportunities that are in danger of being missed.

Broadcasting from terrestrial transmitters has been long recognised as the life-saving resource by the public, acknowledged by world leaders, and confirmed by statistical surveys during emergencies, but a comprehensive framework and a dedicated system has never been developed. Recent changes of media delivery and economic constraints have even led to cuts or complete closure of some transmissions and installations. Consequently there is a

¹The HFCC is a non-governmental, non-profit association and is registered as a regional co-ordination group with the Radiocommunication Sector of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU-R). It is also a Sector Member of the ITU-R. The group - that later became the HFCC - was founded in the early 1990s and succeeded for the first time ever in developing an effective system of frequency management for international shortwave broadcasting. All previous attempts to introduce planning in that part of the spectrum since the discovery of shortwaves failed because of ideological conflicts and overloading that were in evidence for the most part of the 20th century.

The HFCC manages and coordinates global databases of international shortwave broadcasting, by providing tools and services to its Members for the resolution or minimisation of instances of mutual interference. Further information can be found at: <http://www.hfcc.org>. The global outreach is due to the close co-operation of the HFCC with the Arab States and Asia - Pacific broadcasting unions that take part and support the international co-ordination led by the HFCC.

need to re-assess the distinctive role of radio in disaster risk reduction projects.

The HFCC has come up with a project in connection with its partnership with UNESCO on the preparation of the World Radio Day in 2012. It is based on a [global system of transmissions](#) co-ordinated by the HFCC. The project is completely disaster-resilient: Due to the unique long-distance property of radio - and in particular shortwave radio - that travels by means of multiple reflections from layers in the upper earth's atmosphere, a transmitter can cover easily large - both near or distant - world areas from sites well removed from the disaster area. This is important where other platforms such as satellite, FM or Internet are unavailable because of high cost, geographical location, lack of infrastructure or due to restrictions or damages by the disaster. Receivers are inexpensive and there are no access fees. Shortwave radio is important for travellers and isolated people, and it reaches across the Digital Divide to the most disadvantaged and marginalised societies. This is also in keeping with the Declaration and Action Plan of the World Summit on the Information Society.

According to the project the internationally co-ordinated emergency radio programming will be heard also in the areas outside the disaster zone. This will invigorate the public awareness for the integrated approach to disaster risk reduction and for the building and strengthening the resilience of communities against disaster risk.

The absence of procedural and regulatory frameworks for an effective implementation of terrestrial broadcasting for disaster risk reduction is a major impediment. The role of amateur radio for example is defined in almost all ITU documents on emergency telecommunications but the implementation of radio broadcasting is only hardly mentioned.

The HFCC is a strong advocate for incorporating terrestrial broadcasting permanently on the disaster risk reduction agendas of the ITU and other UN agencies and institutions. The cooperation and support of other CDAC members working in partnership should bring about a more decisive and quicker progress in the ITU where the results have been slow and relatively discouraging.

The Hyogo Framework for Action – the 10-year international plan to make the world safer from disaster risk – comes to an end in 2015. The formulation of the next framework will take place through consultations during 2014. The HFCC is confident that the goals and commitments of the CDAC Network in regard to the provision of coordinated emergency communication and information to disaster affected communities should be on the agenda of the new framework.

The HFCC is ready to help the CDAC Network and its members engage with regulatory and technology authorities and organisations especially in the field of terrestrial broadcasting - this includes help in getting the CDAC on board of ITU sectors. The HFCC believes that all stakeholders with the common understanding of the importance of communication and information for the disaster risk reduction will be required for raising awareness and promoting change in the global community.

November 2013